

# THE MCGILL DAILY

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Since 1911.

Monday, October 29, 1990

## McGill joins FEEQ in disputed referendum

by Peter Clibbon

McGill students became full members in the Fédération des étudiantes et étudiants du Québec (FEEQ) last Thursday by a slim margin of 84 votes in a referendum some students say is illegitimate.

The referendum narrowly attained the ten per cent quorum required to make the results binding. Of the 2195 students voting, 1035 students voted in favour of membership, 951 voted against, 186 had no opinion and 23 ballots were spoiled.

The official 'no' committee challenged the referendum Friday, requesting that the Judicial Board invalidate the decision.

Bob Collins of the 'no' committee says the results are too close to justify collecting \$44 000 from McGill students for FEEQ membership fees.

The written protest submitted to the Judicial Board points to several irregularities. A polling station in Thomson House, headquarters of the grad-backed 'no' committee, opened one hour late on the first day, missing the noon rush. Collins says grad students often come to the house only at noon.

"We really do feel this could have tipped the balance," Collins said.

According to the 'no' committee, pro-FEEQ posters were still

hanging in the vicinity of polling stations during the voting period.

They say a poster at the Strathcona Anatomy polling station read "Vote for FEEQ referendum." The words 'Vote' and 'FEEQ' were emphasized by large letters while the other words appeared in small type.

Chief Returning Officer Eric Steinman says he acted promptly when the irregularities were reported Tuesday afternoon. "We sent people to take the 'Yes' posters down immediately," he said.

The Thomson House station opened late due to a "misunderstanding," he added.

Only hours after the results were

announced, Students' Society passed November's interim membership dues. McGill has been giving money to FEEQ as an 'interim' member since 1989.

Students' Society VP external Alex Usher said he expected a greater voter turnout but was satisfied with the marginal win. "McGill and Université de Montréal were test cases for FEEQ. Now that FEEQ is on its feet, we can seriously begin building on its structure," said Usher.

Brian Schnarch, a member of the Coalition for Accessible Public Education, was less confident. "I seriously doubt that FEEQ policies can increase accessibility for stu-

dents. They are not calling for free tuition or a restructuring of the tax system which are fundamental."

Last week Université de Montréal joined FEEQ after a referendum that is being contested by their unofficial 'no' committee.

Bishop's University, Université du Québec at Abitibi-Témiscamingue, Sherbrooke, Trois-Rivières and Rimouski will decide on FEEQ membership this semester.

The Judicial Board must respond to the referendum challenge within two weeks. If the challenge fails, FEEQ dues of one dollar per semester will be collected from each McGill student beginning in January.

## Audrey McLaughlin talks cutbacks

by Susana Béjar and Heather MacKay

Audrey McLaughlin, leader of the federal New Democratic Party, was in Montréal last Thursday to address the nursing community on medicare cutbacks. She met with the *Daily* afterwards to discuss education and youth issues.

"Increasingly, 'accessible' post-secondary education is coming to mean accessible for the rich," she said, adding that cutbacks to education, like cutbacks to health care, hurt the people who can least afford higher costs. She pointed to the GST and the new three per cent tax on student loans as policies that hurt students.

McLaughlin was not prepared to say zero tuition is on the NDP agenda but endorsed it in theory. "I think it's something we should work towards."

She believes government must take some responsibility for the vision held by young people. "A government that can't provide jobs and hope is not doing what it should."

"The coming recession is just another down of many ups and downs that every economy has," McLaughlin said, adding that Canada's economic problems cannot be abated without a closer examination of "philosophical underpinnings".

"There's an idea that what's good for the rich will trickle down," she said. McLaughlin brought up the environment to counter this assumption. "We are realizing now that the corporate ideology is short term."

She acknowledged that the burdens of ecological degradation will fall on young people more than other sectors of the population. McLaughlin said greater community control could help democratize the current system and enlarge the voice of youth.

"It is youth who have the greatest stake in decisions being made today." She said young people should be included on more boards, policy committees, and election ballots. "Canada is in urgent need of democratic renewal."

McLaughlin was guest lecturer at the Eileen Flanagan memorial dinner held in the Four Seasons Hotel. Flanagan helped legitimise nursing as a profession.

The \$75 ticket charity dinner was attended largely by health care professionals and administrators from McGill affiliated hospitals.

McLaughlin made frequent reference to her own 'hard life' while defending the role within the feminist movement of institutions, like the health professions, against the charge of being exclusionary. "Feminism is working for better equality," she said, skirting the class issue.

She praised the work of Flanagan and other women who have helped improve the position of nurses. McLaughlin said she hopes we will see more men in nursing, but added "we probably won't until the salaries are decent."

The audience showed support for the NDP stand on abortion. "You have enough to deal with in a pregnancy. You don't need to worry about being thrown in jail," said McLaughlin.

According to McLaughlin, Canada's ledger books must be rewritten to include the real costs of health and poverty. "These are not welfare expenditures, they are investments," she said. "We have to acknowledge the deficit of poverty."

"In the past, the vision of Canada has come from society's elites," she said. "Now the vision is coming from traditionally marginal groups — women, Québec, the multi-racial communities and others."



DAILY PHOTO: LAURA DESJARDINS

Municipal candidates debated city housing issues with tenants' rights groups last Thursday. Housing activists lashed out at the present administration for neglecting social housing. The candidates, from left to right: Nick Auf der Mauer, Nelson Morin, Sam Boskey, John Gardiner, Dimitri Roussopoulos.

## Candidates confronted

by Alex Poulis

Montréal's municipal government must shoulder the blame for the lack of low-cost housing units in the city, housing advocates charged last week at a debate on the issue.

According to Front d'action populaire en réaménagement urbain (FRAPRU) — a provincial state-supported housing coalition — the Montréal Citizens' Movement's handling of the housing issue has been "unsatisfactory" but better than the former Civic Party administration.

The MCM's executive committee member in charge of housing, John Gardiner, was one of the five panelists who assessed Montréal's programs for the homeless, social housing, protection of housing stock and development during the party's four-year rule.

Between 1987 and 1989, FRAPRU said, the number of dwellings

controlled by the Office municipal d'habitation de Montréal rose to 2560 units, but only 1400 of them were genuine low rent units. The other units were assigned to private owners through the guise of the rent supplement program, the housing coalition argued.

Gardiner said he might ask Québec to study controlled rent increases from the perspective of large (e.g. corporate) and small property owners. Ontario is already applying the rent ceilings.

"We will draw our conclusions from this during the next few days, and in November we will notify Québec of our recommendations."

Claudette Godley, an economist and president of the Réseau d'aide aux personnes seules ou itinérantes, lashed out at the MCM for its lack of direction on the issue of low-cost housing, which she said all Montréal citizens are entitled to.

"I'm sorry, but I can't accept

this economic lesson, John," Godley told Gardiner after listening to him answer several tenant's questions.

Resounding applause followed. "After listening to your speeches and thoughts on social housing, I'm very disappointed," she added.

Responding to Godley's statement, Gardiner said, "To have a vision like Claudette's requires a policy. We have a policy. And I hope we can count on its application during the next ten years."

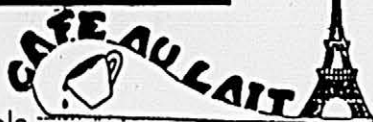
Jean-Pierre Wilsey of a St-Henri housing group said the city must provide funds to resolve housing problems as Québec did when it compensated the victims of this summer's native crisis in Oka.

The panelists also discussed included rent increases, the welfare reform law Bill 37, condo-conversion, landlord discrimination and Overdale.



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## SENATE BRIEFS

## A \$900 000 smackeroo

A controversial \$900 000 in student aid was approved by Senate last Wednesday — four months late.

The money, intended to ease the pinch of tuition fee increases, follows recommendations presented in a report from the Ad Hoc Committee on Tuition Fees.

The report echoes an earlier version drawn up last May that never made it to Senate because Students' Society reps withdrew support.

At the time, Students' Society president Kate Morisset said \$900 000 was unacceptable, insisting \$1.2 million had been promised. Other committee members disagreed.

Concil rep Eric Darier said the delay will hurt students — any portion of the \$900 000 unclaimed this year will likely be withheld as superfluous in next year's budget. The fund's late start has limited distribution of the money.

Senate also extended the committee's life span another 12 months.

## Cheating monitors

Students are being cheated of their rights, according to Students' Society VP University Deborah Pentesco.

Due to a new computer system that compares exam responses for unusual similarities, five students face disciplinary action, having been 'caught cheating' in a secret trial run.

Senate has not approved the system which has yet to be tested for accuracy.

Following objections led by Pentesco, Senate agreed the monitoring system should be sent back for further investigation. No evidence from the computer will be used in the case against the five students. Nonetheless, they are being asked to rewrite their exams.

## COUNCIL BRIEFS

## Of interest

McGill students working on a booklet about Mohawk issues received approval for financing at council Thursday evening.

Councillors unanimously agreed to give \$3000 from a new Social Awareness Fund. The booklet is a project of the McGill Ad Hoc Committee for Solidarity with Mohawk Nations.

Also of interest at Thursday's meeting was a notice of motion from the Women's Union to amend the Students' Society constitution with an affirmative action clause at the next council meeting.

And, in what may turn into a long debate, the *McGill Tribune*, a campus newspaper published by the Students' Society, kicked off an effort to increase editorial autonomy.

## much ado about nothing

A heated debate erupted on the question of taking-out two small ads inviting nominations for student-at-large on the committee to oversee renovations of Students' Society offices in the Union Building.

Last year, Council approved the renovations which could cost \$80 000.

When two councillors moved to advertise in McGill's student media, the Executive jumped to oppose the motion in the name of fiscal responsibility. Somehow, no one thought to mention the \$80 000.

Nominations opened on Thursday. Can anyone say... 'kiosk'?

## Tunes from the Plateau

by M. D. Pavelich

The following district profile is the third in a Daily series intended to help students sort out the issues in the November 4 municipal elections. Jeanne-Mance was profiled last Wednesday. Still to come: Saint-Jacques, Saint-Henri and Mile End, plus a special Municipal Election Issue November 1.

Slow or misdirected public works projects are seriously affecting the environment and Montréalers' quality of life, say social activists and candidates opposing the MCM in the Plateau Mont-Royal district.

This primarily middle-class, francophone district is bound by Mont-Royal, Papineau, Sherbrooke and St. Denis.

Of the 16 830 Montréalers who live in the Plateau Mont-Royal district, 88.1 per cent are Francophone, 8.5 per cent allophone, and 3.5 per cent anglophone.

## Hot Issues

## Gentrification and Housing Controls

Empty houses and small apartment units in the Plateau are being bought and renovated by the well-to-do. Rents are up, forcing those from lower income brackets to move east. More than eighty per cent of Plateau dwellers are tenants.

## Traffic

High-volume traffic, inadequate bike paths and a lack of parking space in commercial areas are a problem. Efforts to increase bike paths have been obstructed by improper markings, and cars parked on the paths.

Le Monde à Bicyclette's Bob Silverman, also an Ecology Montréal candidate in the Laurier district, calls cars in the Plateau "public enemy number one".

## Parks and Other Green Spaces

Recent renovation at Lafontaine Park saw the cutting down of old trees and addition of concrete structures were a part of recent renovations at Lafontaine Park. "I hope you like concrete," says Municipal Party candidate Gilles Lavigne. "What they've done is really stupid."

## Recycling and the Environment

The district now has communal bins on two Mont-Royal corners — one at Boyer and the other at Fabre.

Action Montréal Vert spokesperson Joe Lechay says, "The City of Montréal has been dragging its feet. We need more action now." Action Montréal Vert wants curb-side pick-up of all recyclable materials.

## Consultation and Openness

MCM critics say the administration hasn't opened up city government as it once promised to do. "They've set up these committees, but those consulted aren't heard or listened to," says the Civic Party's Jacques Marquis. "It's become costly and useless. People feel hurt and misled."

## Meet the Candidates

There are six candidates and one co-candidate running in the Plateau Mont-Royal district. Montréal Mayor Jean Doré, co-candidate with MCM incumbent Thérèse Daviau, is also in the district. If he were to lose on the mayoral ballot, Doré would take Daviau's seat on council should the MCM take Plateau Mont-Royal.

## Thérèse Daviau (Montreal Citizens' Movement)

A founding member of the MCM, Daviau says it

has taken much of the past four years to change civil service attitudes left over from the Drapeau regime. Daviau, a lawyer until her election in 1986, cites examples of MCM-inspired openness in municipal politics like unlocked city hall doors, open question period during council meetings, and regional advisory councils.

Quote: "We've made some mistakes, but they weren't done in bad faith. Sometimes we called the wrong thing by the wrong name, but with practice things become clearer and clearer."

## Yolande Cohen (Ecology Montreal)

UQAM history professor Yolande Cohen says her priorities are protecting the environment and feminist issues. In addition to various ecological projects, Cohen proposes greater communication between community groups and city hall. She says women should make a place for themselves in municipal politics so they can control policies concerning their well-being.

Quote: "There's a real vacuum of leadership in politics today. I think feminism and concern for the environment should be proposed to fill it."

## Daron Westman (Democratic Coalition)

Cegep and university teacher Daron Westman says closed decision-making is a big problem with the present administration. Westman, an openly gay candidate, proposes more participation by gays and lesbians as a means to greater democratization of Montréal. He says Montréal can achieve human scale urban living through general projects like free transit for seniors, better recycling and more social housing.

Quote: "We have an administration that ignores the will of the people and a master plan that puts developers before people."

## Guy Roy (White Elephant)

A muralist at a local dinner theatre, Guy Roy says accessibility and awareness programs are key to improving quality of life in the Plateau Mont-Royal district.

Quote: "In my opinion, the MCM is little more than a modernized Civic Party. I'm sure they'd disagree, but the facts are there."

## Jacques Marquis (Civic Party)

Marquis' party ruled in the Drapeau years, but he says the Civic Party is now a reform movement and example of responsible government. The Montréal lawyer says his political motivation comes from a desire to improve quality of life through harmony with self, between the sexes and with the environment.

Quote: "Doré's administration is medieval. He's behaving like a prince or a king by ignoring the needs of the majority."

## Gilles Lavigne (Municipal Party)

UQAM urban planning professor Gilles Lavigne says he dislikes the MCM precedent of buying existing buildings to create co-operatives and city housing. He says people in low income brackets should be encouraged to own their own homes through loan programs and property tax breaks.

Quote: "Gentrification can be a good thing. It shows that people like the intellectuals find the city a better place to live than the suburbs, but we can't forget about the people living there before them."

## DISRUPTIVE ELEMENTS

## BAD JUNK

Some people just can't stay out of trouble. The dealer with a contract out on his life (see column last week), sold some bad mescaline to six people last Saturday night, four of whom went to hospital.

Two had their stomachs pumped. Turns out the mesc had been cut with butane, chlorine and drano. Way to go, pal. And you wonder why people are out to get you.

## A POLAROID WITH DONNY

A mob of gaudy RX Soleil/Metropolis types swarmed around one of the planet's more plasticky anti-heroes at Foufounes last Tuesday. A conversation with the doorman confirmed our suspicions — Donny Osmond! Who else would drive up to the fiery Fouf gates in a neon-laden limo. The tanned groupies wandered aimlessly while the Polaroid worked its magic, developing a portrait fit for the fireplace mantle.

This is just another short scene in a long play. The mainstream gradually moves in on those on the fringe. They pirate themes and ideas all the while blaming street trash for the malaise in society. The eccentrics make a concerted effort to be different — they don't hide behind day-glow limos...they can't.

There's a guy living on the street near Fouf by the name of Chico. He suffers the indignity of people in leather jackets and mink coats walking through his 'you got a quarter' requests. It seems the only people in this city giving money are the eccentrics. Chico described a rare case of a 'suit' giving him twenty bucks to eat at Harvey's — but he says peace and love anyway.

The Gazette, in a rare show of involvement, ran a feature on Friday by a worker at Passages, a downtown shelter for prostitutes. It corroborated that the homeless get most of their money from friends — the spiffs don't give.

## OVERHEARD AND UNDERSTOOD (?)

• The return trip from Café Campus last Tuesday (Retro-night): "Are you really considering this? They'll pull it out and slap the cuffs on it, man." Remember, as Peter Pearson says in *The Gazette*, pedophilia and buggery are no laughing matters. Hey Pete! Obscenity is a human manifestation.

We're not so sure that anyone knows this city from the rate of response, but if you're the exception give us a write or give us a buzz. The number's 398-6784, or send to:

## DISRUPTIVE ELEMENTS

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# THE MCGILL DAILY

HYDE PARK

## Compeer seeks friends

Opinion by José Carlos da Conceicao.

Each of us knows what it's like to be lonely at some point in our lives. This is an important reason for understanding the loneliness that a person suffering from mental health problems experiences. In a society where this topic is still taboo, Compeer Montréal/Entre-Amis brings hope and dignity to these individuals.

Compeer, a non-profit alternative resource centre, pairs a volunteer with an ex-psychiatric patient in order to help reintegrate them into society. The first and only Canadian chapter of the American network Compeer USA, the organization has existed since 1986 and operates from the Department of Community Health at Ste-Justine Hospital.

The clientele is referred and followed by a therapist and consists mainly of depressive, manic-depressive and schizophrenic people. It should be noted that Compeer does not accept dangerous individuals.

The service requires a mere hour per week from volunteers. This may seem insignificant, but it can make a difference in someone's life. For the purpose of stability, a one year commitment is asked of the volunteers. Volunteers are not obliged to divulge their addresses or telephone numbers to their participants. In this way, Compeer keeps the confidentiality of the two parties. In the end, the pairings unite individuals with similar interests and often great friendships are formed.

Anyone can become a volunteer. The organization offers a fifteen hour training course (approved by the Montreal Catholic School Commission) which covers topics such as various forms of mental illness, medication, side-effects and community resources.

Compeer offers activities and gives information sessions for its volunteers. One has difficulty distinguishing between the volunteers and the participants at such gatherings. People often hold prejudices against those with mental health problems but we all need a friend, no matter who we are.

The organization is always looking for volunteers. If you wish to offer your services, or require further information please do not hesitate to call at 271-5818.

## Condescension and absolutism

To the Daily:

Re: the *Daily's* habitual stand on life, the universe, and everything.

As an occasional peruser of the *Daily*, I wanted to suggest that perhaps rather than attributing antagonism toward the *Daily* to the political orientation of critics, the cause of hostility may instead be found in the tone and manner which is typically to be found within the pages of said publication.

Specific occurrences of ad hominem and misrepresentation often bring forth sporadic bursts of protest such as that of Ms. Jones. However, contempt, intolerance, and even viciousness are recurring themes in the *Daily's* articles and I find it disturbing to see such an attitude presented as "the fight against injustice."

Fighting injustice does not consist in better choice of who to devalue and degrade; it lies, rather, in insistence that humans not be devalued and degraded at all. The mixture of condescension and absolutism which is typically spewed forth in the *Daily* doesn't, to my mind, offer an alternative to oppression, but rather an alternative oppression.

Ideas are very powerful tools but it is easy to forget that tools are meant to serve humans, not vice versa. Exalting an idea as "right" may indeed make it more powerful but the sacrifice is flexibility. It's easy to lose sight of the fact

that an idea is a fallible, human creation and to do so is a fatal error. It all comes down to how important being a human being is on your list of priorities. It's my personal feeling that being left-wing shouldn't come before being a human any more than being rich should.

There is no particular affinity on my part for the current social structure. Truth be told, my "working class" credentials are probably more valid than many who claim to be the voice of the oppressed. Yes, Canada's social structure needs to be changed. No, I wouldn't like to see the driving force behind the *Daily* as the author of that change. Intolerance and bigotry lead to oppression regardless of where they place themselves on the political spectrum. Oversimplification and self-righteousness in proponents of social justice often do more to discredit it than any conscious attempt could.

Cindy Holder  
BA U3

## Green hypocrisy

To the Daily:

McGill students who pursue the cult of political iconoclasm place as one of their great touchstones environmental awareness. Birkenstocks are worn into disrepair, hair is left disheveled as a symbol of anti-consumerism, "environmentally friendly" spray cans are purchased, vague criticisms are murmured about the ozone layer or the toxicity of the St. Lawrence.

On October 22, the Wrath of Grapes and the McGill Debating Union co-sponsored a debate in the Alley regarding a boycott of California grapes in protest of various pesticides which are purportedly carcinogenic. Save for Debating Union members and Wrath of Grapes organizers, not a single McGill student attended the debate. How typical of the hypocrisy of those who pay lip service to these issues in order to cast upon themselves the correct aura of environmental concern; how typical of the herd mentality, wallowing in self-justification without ever discussing or engaging an issue; how typical of an atrophied and amoral society.

But no fear. We are young, and ideologically correct, and ingenuous. Who needs to discuss issues?

Chris Gosnell  
U3 Arts

MDAHCAESA

To the Daily:

I have noticed of late that the light-

ing in the Alley has diminished somewhat. This reduction of visibility in of itself may not be such a bad thing, sometimes I genuinely have no interest in seeing the person with whom I am sitting; but, such matters aside for the moment, candlelight does seem inappropriate at 11 am. Seduction and romance are far from my mind at this hour and reading has become an impossibility.

With respect to this impossibility of reading I merely suggest an acronym: The McGill Daily Ad Hoc Committee Against Eye Strain in the Alley - MDAHCAESA.

Duff McLeod  
U3 Arts

## Kiosk... or trough?

To the Daily:

\$24 000 for an information kiosk? The money could have provided several student scholarships for bright/ needy students, or more badly needed Xerox machines, or more books for the library, or the renovation of a lecture hall, or extra lab equipment, or to fund a research project, or part-time jobs for needy students, or extra cash for several student clubs, or for the purchase of more vending machines or change machines, or as a fund for awards to professors for excellence in teaching, or to fund a departmental student association, or to improve the Currie Gym, or to pay for new physical education facilities, or to fund the *Daily* or the *Tribune*, or to improve facilities for the disabled, or to pay for an STD/Aids info campaign for students, or to buy new desks and chairs for classrooms, or to pay for extra copies of reserve materials in the libraries, or to buy more bike racks, or to renovate washrooms, or to pay for the new theatre extension in the Arts building, or to provide the *Total Workout* free of charge for a year, or to help pay for the badly-needed renovation of the MacIntyre Building's ventilation system, or to help pay for a multitude of student services offered by the university.

Kate Morrissey and Mary-Margaret Jones have shown themselves to be stupid and arrogant and unwilling to listen to the people they were elected to represent. The SSMU appears to be like most governments - a trough.

Tony Manol  
MA U1

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# Election in Guatemala promises little change

*The vast majority of Guatemalans say they care little, or not at all, who is elected president in November. Among those who do have an opinion—and are willing to discuss it—the most popular candidate, until he was disqualified, was a bloodthirsty dictator who eight years ago oversaw the slaughter of tens of thousands of Indians in a “dirty war” against insurgents.*

By Zeb Brown and  
Marjolein van der Veen

As Guatemala's first election under a civilian government in two decades draws near, General Efraín Ríos Montt's unexpected popularity is probably due to a frightening jump in urban crime. The middle class of Guatemala City remember him being hard on crime, hard on death squads; they recall his zealous Protestant moralizing, and see in him a ready solution.

They have chosen to dismiss the prediction of outgoing President Vinicio Cerezo, who said a year ago that the nascent crime wave was politically motivated. He said a “climate of terror and instability” would be created “to justify an attempt to return to the past or the installation of a president promising a tough policy to control violence.”

**W**hile he drove crime out of the cities eight during his 16-month reign in 1982-83, Ríos Montt actually intensified the violence, managing the deaths of an estimated 30 000 people, most of them rural Indians. “We don't have a scorched earth policy,” he said at the time. “We have a scorched Communist policy.”

Ríos Montt was ousted in a coup that precipitated another two years of military rule, and then a new constitution and elections in 1985. That constitution, in a thinly-veiled slight to the general, excludes from the presidency anyone who has held power undemocratically.

Initially saying he would interpret the constitution as he pleased, Ríos Montt campaigned as a presidential candidate until the Supreme Court barred him earlier this month. In September, he had threatened to “choose violence if the legal means are closed to us,” but it isn't clear if he can now provoke much more than random disturbances.

“He has some support in the military, but not enough to pull off a coup, realistically speaking,” said Joe Gorin of the Washington-based Network in Solidarity with the People of Guatemala. “It's possible that he'll try.”

Along with the discovery that two thirds of Guatemalans couldn't care less who wins the election, a recent poll also found that the three leading candidates all lean heavily to the right. After Ríos Montt, who polled 18 per cent before his disqualification, comes vice-president Jorge Carpio (17 per cent), followed by a former director of the Guatemalan Tourist Commission, Alvaro Arzú (9 per cent), who once threatened to sue Amnesty International for discouraging tourists from visiting the country, and Alfonso Cabrera (4 per cent), President Cerezo's choice as successor.

Cabrera has been implicated in drug trafficking and two West German members of parliament recently alleged that a bank linked to him is a front for money laundering, while his brother was caught in a drug bust last August.

There are another nine candidates in the

running, but none of the 12 “represent authentic democracy,” according to Sergio Guzman Muñoz, a member of the Union of Guatemalan Workers, who spoke recently in Washington, D.C. “They're all only looking for votes, so they can win and govern in demagogic discourse.”

**F**or Guatemala's Indian population, now largely politicized and suffering extreme poverty, the chorus line of right-wingers has

lead to apathy and, in some cases, a return to the armed resistance which provoked the brutality of the early 1980s.

Despite the army's assurances that the guerrilla war is over, Guatemalan hospitals are reportedly facing bed and staff shortages, and are overcrowded with amputee soldiers the army wants to keep out of sight. The guerrillas claimed 1100 army casualties in the first six months of 1989, and according to Gorin are active in 14 of 22 provinces, including the capital. They have refused entreaties from the army to lay down their weapons and form a political party, saying that genuine conditions for democracy do not exist in Guatemala.

As if to underscore that fact, the secretary-general of the Democratic Revolutionary Party was assassinated a few weeks ago. The leftist party is new in Guatemala and isn't participating in this election, but the murder—along with the army's intense hatred of the left—explains why “no candidate is addressing the fundamental issues” or “offering a real hope for change,” as Gorin noted.

In the late eighties, peasants and teachers unions staged lengthy national strikes in the hopes of forcing a measure of change. Although Guatemala is the most resource-rich country in Central America, almost 90 per cent of families live in poverty, and half of the population earns less than US\$150 per year.

The 1970s and 1980s saw the rich get richer and the poor poorer, and most of the land is controlled by a few large plantation owners. Indians—between 50 and 80 per cent of the population—no longer own enough land to support themselves and work on the plantations at least part of the year for starvation wages, picking export crops.

The strikers were by and large unsuccessful, and prompted Cerezo to warn union leaders against being tempted “to jeopardize themselves so that the government will commit repressive acts.” But along with bloodshed, this demonstration of the peasants' economic muscle spurred the government on to develop a new sophisticated, deceitful strategy of repression.

“To subjugate and neutralize the labour unions,” Guzman said, “parallel organizations have been created which have given psychological blows to the labour and popular movement.” Through these organizations, labour supposedly cooperates with management and the government in *solidadismo*, a kind of corporatism.

“Through *solidadismo*, management tries to make the worker believe she or he can be part owner of the business,” according to



Guzman. “Workers are working 12 hours a day, including Saturdays and Sundays, with no overtime. Workers get rewards such as motorcycles and TVs, but do not realize that these are coming from their retirement benefits.”

“*Solidadismo*, which goes against the right of unions to organize, is part of the neo-liberal economic model being imposed as a model on Central America.”

It's a novel tactic, after years of straightforward violence, but unlikely to displace the proven methods of the past. The military is expected to continue to run the country following this election and when Cerezo's successor is inaugurated in January, he will almost certainly serve as an ineffectual figurehead.

**N**ew York-based Americas Watch, Amnesty International and the U.S. State Department have all castigated the outgoing govern-

ment for allowing extrajudicial killings, torture and abductions to go unpunished. Most observers agree, however, that although complicit, Cerezo was not directly responsible for the ongoing atrocities.

In July, the only conviction ever obtained in Guatemala of security forces personnel for a human rights crime was overturned. Most others have been obstructed from the beginning by a blanket amnesty declared just days before the military turned over power to Cerezo. Usually, human rights crimes are simply ignored by the army and security forces, easily the worst offenders.

As a case in point, the army was strongly implicated in a massacre of 22 peasants in November 1988, but no serious investigation was conducted. The army's main response—besides warning witnesses to denounce the guerrillas for the crime—was to distribute leaflets to neighbouring villages which read, “You know the delinquent terrorists killed your relatives. Don't be deceived by organizations that only try to tarnish the prestige of the Army.”

Canada uncritically accepted the army's version of the incident, and soon after joined other Western states and banks in pledging up to US\$1 billion in new aid to Guatemala, following an eight-year suspension. American non-lethal military aid for 1991 totals almost US\$3 million.

(The resumption of military aid a few years ago seemed as sensible, at best, as an American consul's recent description of the army as a “guardian of the democracy that guarantees an atmosphere of peace, security

and social progress that all Guatemalans can enjoy.”)

But it is unlikely that the Americans ever stopped funding the Guatemalan army. As with Nicaragua's contras and UNO party, the dollars merely find different routes; in Guatemala today, like much of Latin America, the Central Intelligence Agency and the Drug Enforcement Agency are allegedly investing in the army's intelligence branch (in spite of their terrible human rights record), and helping to keep Guatemalan society highly militarized.

Guatemala is important in the “war on drugs,” which is used to legitimize this type of covert action, since it is a major transshipment point for drug traffickers and itself a producer of opium. But along with anti-narcotic projects, for their CIA paycheques Guatemalan Army Intelligence is also reportedly spying on El Salvador's leftist guerrillas and the Sandinistas in Nicaragua.

**W**hen Ríos Montt took power, he imitated the counterinsurgency techniques developed by the Americans in Vietnam, and by 1985 at least 440 villages had been razed and around 100 000 Guatemalans killed—of whom 5 per cent were guerrillas—along with 40 000 “disappeared,” almost certainly dead; every so often mass graves are unearthed containing victims from those days, identifiable only by their clothing.

A million villagers were eventually conscripted into “civil patrols” and forced to donate a full day of unpaid labour per week as counterrevolutionaries. Ríos Montt's evangelism, which told him that “Guatemalans are the chosen people of the New Testament,” equated Catholics with collaborators, so nuns, priests and entire congregations were summarily executed. His religious ally, the California-based Word church and their message of resignation, were able to establish a solid foothold in the country; today 35 per cent of Guatemalans are fundamentalists, more than any Central American country.

Guatemala's last popular government lasted for ten years from 1945-54; its radical land reform measures were reversed after a coup, and everything, from human rights to economic conditions to land ownership, has deteriorated ever since. Next month's election aren't expected to change much, if anything. Nor, it seems, will the next, or the next, so long as the military maintains its stranglehold on the country.



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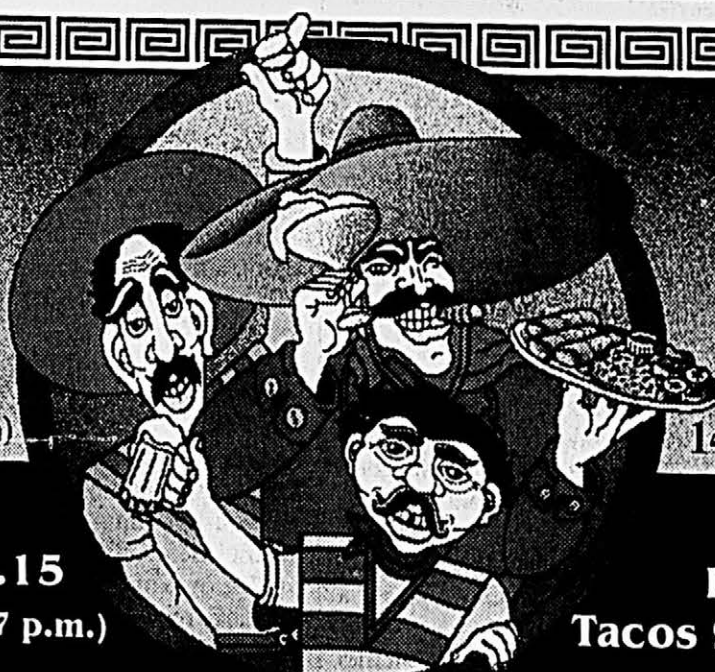
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Found. Set of two keys corner of Peel and Dr. Penfield on Friday Oct. 19th. Call Kevin at 282-1669.

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## 374 - Personals

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Quiver, as the deadline approacheth! Oct 31st shall see the doors to The Red Herring office slam shut, and pleading contributors huddled by the door-frame shall be shunned.

Foster Parents Association Workshop. Mon. Oct. 29 5:30 pm. Union Building, Rm 310. Volunteers and interested parties are very welcome.

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The Process of Change in South Africa is the topic of a talk by Nancy Thebes at the Newman Centre at 17h.

The Alliance for the Mentally Ill meets at 19h30 to hear June Beeby speak on "Help for the Families: More Than Just Support" at 4333 Cote Ste. Catherine Road. Admission is free, call 486-1448 for information.

Chateaubriand et L'Amérique is the topic of a lecture by Fernande Bassan at the Hall Building, Sir George Williams Campus of Concordia, 1455 de Maisonneuve W. at 20h15.

Foster Parents' Association Workshop in room 310, Union at 17h30. Volunteers and all interested parties are welcome.

Tel-Aviv University information session at Hillel House, 3460 Stanley, at 19h15.

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